



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FEDERAL GRAND JURY IN AUSTIN INDICTS THREE IN ALIEN SMUGGLING CASE

U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that a federal grand jury in Austin, Texas, returned a three-count indictment charging three Mexican Nationals with immigration related offenses.

The grand jury charged 21-year-old Erik Angeles-Mendoza, 22-year-old Daniel Angeles-Mendoza and 20-year-old Felipe Ceron-Espinoza with one count each of conspiracy to smuggle, transport and harbor illegal aliens for financial gain, harboring illegal aliens for financial gain and possession of a firearm by an illegal alien.

On July 17, 2003, Austin Police officers responded to a call from a Honduran man who claimed that his wife was being held against her will at an Austin residence. At the residence, police discovered a Hispanic male walking around the house carrying a Remington 12-gauge pump -action shotgun. Upon entering the house, the officers found the defendants along with 26 individuals from Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico who claimed they were being smuggled into the country illegally for between \$1,500 - \$1,800.

Upon conviction, each defendant faces up to ten years in federal prison and a maximum \$250,000 fine per count.

This case is being investigated by the Anti-Smuggling Unit of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Austin Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Gerald C. Carruth is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

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